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President's summary

Opening statements

1. The following speakers made opening statements: the outgoing President (Spain) of the Trade and Development Board at its sixty-first session; the Secretary-General of UNCTAD; the representative of the Philippines, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China; the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania, on behalf of the African Group; the representative of Argentina, on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States; the representative of the European Union, on behalf of the European Union and its member States; the representative of Estonia, on behalf of Group D; the representative of Canada, on behalf of the JUSSCANNZ group; the representative of Benin, on behalf of the least developed countries; the representative of Paraguay, on behalf of the landlocked developing countries; the representative of Egypt, on behalf of the Arab Group; the representative of Sri Lanka, on behalf of the Group of 15; the representative of China; the representative of India; the representative of Barbados, on behalf of the small island developing States; the representative of Switzerland; the representative of Tunisia; the representative of Bangladesh; the representative of Kenya; the representative of Zimbabwe; the representative of Thailand; the representative of Nepal; the representative of Japan; the representative of Ecuador; the representative of Morocco; the representative of Belarus; the representative of South Africa; and the representative of Ethiopia. The representative of the Third World Network made a statement.

2. The outgoing President (Spain) of the Trade and Development Board noted that her work had focused primarily on preparations for the forthcoming fourteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD XIV), including negotiations on the theme and sub-themes for the Conference, achieving dialogue on the new sustainable development agenda to be approved in New York and ensuring that UNCTAD's role was recognized.

3. The Secretary-General of UNCTAD noted the close correspondence between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and UNCTAD's longstanding vision of prosperity for all. The outcome of the third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa had strengthened UNCTAD's role as the focal point in the United Nations system for the interface between financing development and the sustainable development goals. He underscored UNCTAD efforts to improve in management, particularly results-based management, streamlining of processes, increased cooperation with other regional and international organizations, and sharpened relevance and coherence of publications. The UNCTAD Regional Office for Africa had been opened in July in Addis Ababa. The UNCTAD Toolbox presented the technical cooperation products available to countries to pursue their development objectives. With a view to the next quadrennial conference, and in the context of the challenges for the sustainable development goals, the Secretary-General presented his report to UNCTAD IV, which outlined the four actions lines where UNCTAD could make a difference in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

4. The representatives of all regional groups recognized the contributions that UNCTAD could make to the implementation of the sustainable development goals through its three pillars. Many representatives and delegations emphasized the importance of UNCTAD XIV in the context of the post-2015 development agenda. Other key international development conferences to be held in 2015, such as the Tenth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization and the twenty-first Conference of the Parties

on climate change, should also be taken account of in relation to the role of UNCTAD as the focal point for the integrated treatment of trade and development, and the interrelated issues of finance, technology, investment and sustainable development.

5. Several delegations noted their different concerns regarding the need to consider issues such as adequate policy space for sustainable development, productive capacities, youth employment and women's empowerment and the challenges for trade and development in least developed countries and landlocked developing countries. Some delegations underscored the importance of common but differentiated responsibilities and the right to development, including for UNCTAD XIV.

6. The representative of one regional group reiterated the concern that the flagship *Trade and Development Report, 2015* was not to be discussed during the session and requested that the discussions of the report be undertaken during the December 2015 executive session of the Trade and Development Board, which was endorsed by many other regional groups. The representative of another regional group noted that despite Africa being the fastest growing continent, that growth was commodity-driven and did not create needed jobs for the growing youth population. Thus, UNCTAD should further explore how, through technical cooperation and capacity-building activities, to address that and other development challenges for the continent. The representative of another regional group stated that, in the area of investment for development, the international investment regime and investor–State dispute settlement system required reform, as stated in the *World Investment Report 2015*.

7. The representative of one regional group requested that UNCTAD XIV focus on the concern of least developed countries that inadequate financing for development made progress towards achieving the objectives of the Istanbul Programme of Action far from satisfactory. Noting the forthcoming discussions on debt management, the representative of another regional group stated that, due to their small size and vulnerability to external shocks, exposure to natural disasters, high interest rates and low growth rates, small island developing States were among the most highly indebted countries in the world. The representative of another regional group, recalling paragraph 76 of the Vienna Programme of Action, called on having a special space in the Trade and Development Board agenda to discuss the contributions of UNCTAD to landlocked developing countries and to mainstream such work into the intergovernmental machinery. The representative of another regional group noted the recession in the Palestinian economy for the first time since 2006. Despite the assistance provided by international organizations and countries, that alone was insufficient to achieve growth in all of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

8. Some delegations noted UNCTAD's ongoing efforts to optimize management and administrative structures, including the efforts to create a culture of continuous improvement in the secretariat and strengthen internal accountability. The representative of one regional group noted that recent evaluations had confirmed the relevance and importance of UNCTAD work, identifying its strengths, including it research capability, the scope of its internal expertise and external networks and its ability to provide concrete policy suggestions. He also noted that, looking forward to UNCTAD XIV, it was up to member States to move from decisions to actions.